



**DATE:** January 4, 2012  
**TO:** Bellevue Transportation Commission  
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**SUBJECT:** Downtown Transportation Plan Update

## **INTRODUCTION**

The update to the Downtown Transportation Plan will address mobility issues and challenges and support Downtown growth forecasts looking out to 2030.

On January 12, staff and Plan update consultant DKS Associates will review the public outreach events and activities and the comments received as documented in the draft Transportation Issues Scoping Report. Formal Commission action is not requested, however Commissioners are asked to review the draft scoping report and identify several key issues for each mobility topic.

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The City Council has directed staff to ensure that there is a broad based and inclusive public participation component in the development of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. Outreach should involve the residential and business stakeholders in Downtown and stakeholders in the surrounding neighborhoods and broader business community.

During the late Summer and Fall of 2011, staff engaged the community in a number of ways to explain the scope of the planning process and listen to their concerns related to the Downtown transportation system.

Most of the community engagement was through meetings with the members of several organizations. At each meeting staff presented an overview of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update and invited those in attendance to respond to the question: What are the important Downtown transportation issues facing Bellevue?

Additional, targeted outreach was aimed at pedestrians and bicyclists. These non-motorized stakeholders were not confined to a conference room, but rather were engaged on the sidewalks and roadways of Downtown Bellevue. Here, participants in walking audits and bicycle tours could point out the transportation issues they face.

Both types of outreach yielded comments on existing conditions as well as expected future conditions, plus ideas for projects that could address the issues. Staff has compiled all of the comments in the Transportation Issues Scoping Report in two sections – Part 2 of the report provides a summary of comments on the issues and Part 3 includes all the notes for each meeting and event, plus a few comments from an on-line questionnaire.

### Community Outreach Meetings and Events

Staff met with members of several organizations that have a distinct interest in Downtown mobility. The following is a brief overview of these organizations that have been involved in the Downtown Transportation Plan Update, and whose ongoing participation is expected:

- Bellevue Downtown Association

The Bellevue Downtown Association (BDA) is a nonprofit, membership organization whose mission is “To lead the continuing evolution of Downtown Bellevue as the economic and cultural heart of the Eastside” Staff met with the BDA Urban Planning and Transportation Committee that is tasked with tracking the work of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update.

- Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is the “voice of the business” in Bellevue, and advocate on behalf of its members on issues critical to the economic vitality and quality of life in the region. As such the Chamber is distinctly interested in mobility for Downtown employees, visitors and residents.

- Eastside Transportation Association

The Eastside Transportation Association (ETA) is a private-sector group dedicated to improving the quality of life and the environment by reducing congestion in the Puget Sound Region through increased mobility. While the ETA has a geographic focus that is larger than Downtown Bellevue, regional transportation issues directly affect the mobility of people and goods into and out of Downtown

- Building Owners and Managers Association

The Building Owners and Managers Association of Seattle King County (BOMA) is a professional trade association whose member firms own or manage commercial real estate or provide goods and services to the industry. BOMA represents the interests of commercial real estate owners, real estate professionals, and allied members through leadership in advocacy, information sharing, and professional development and accreditation. Downtown mobility for people and goods is clearly of interest to BOMA.

- Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative

The Eastside Easy Rider Collaborative provides older adults, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals and youth in East King County with information and tools to find and use the transportation services they need. The organization's goal is to improve the mobility of all people for access to social, recreation, education and human service opportunities. Mobility through an accessible transportation system is a key factor in the quality of life for the many Downtown residents whom this organization represents.

Outdoor activities included walking and bicycling events. With the support of the Bellevue Downtown Association and the Cascade Bicycle Club that provided outreach to their members, staff conducted bicycle tours within Downtown and to major destinations for commuting, errands and recreation. Feet First, a pedestrian advocacy organization based in Seattle, helped organize and facilitate two "walking audits" that included both Downtown employees and residents.

Another indoor event was an open house held in City Hall on November 1. Following an introduction and welcome by Deputy Mayor Conrad Lee, staff provided an overview presentation to the 50-or so in attendance. Everyone was then invited to view display materials focused on the various mobility modes and ask questions and provide comments to staff. Transit agencies King County Metro and Sound Transit also had display materials at the open house.

#### Outreach Techniques

Staff employed a number of techniques to inform the community of opportunities to become involved in the Downtown Transportation Plan Update. A plan update web site went "live" very early in the process to become the central repository of information as well as an electronic means to gather input. When the web site is updated, an e-mail announcement goes out to everyone on the e-mail list. Social media sites Facebook and Twitter were used to push out information on upcoming events. In the "blogosphere", meetings and events were posted on the Seattle Transit Blog, the Seattle Bike Blog and the Downtown Bellevue Network Blog. Press releases were picked up by the print and electronic media, and paper fliers went up around Downtown.

#### **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES SCOPING REPORT**

The three part report (attached) provides an overview of the Downtown Transportation Plan Update, including the approved measures of effectiveness, a summary of comments from community outreach events and the notes from each of those events.

In the comments section (Part 2 of the report) is a summary of the input received throughout the late Summer and Fall. Staff has organized these comments by mode in a manner similar to the mobility topics in the measures of effectiveness.

### Mobility Issues

Mobility issues contained in the draft scoping report are all of those identified by the community. They constitute one source of ideas for projects and policies to update the Downtown Transportation Plan. Comments are organized based on mobility mode:

- Pedestrian Mobility

Comments on pedestrian mobility were offered at each community outreach event. Being able to walk safely and comfortably within Downtown is a high priority for everyone, and commenters pointed out several examples of situations where there were concerns about the existing conditions that could be improved. The walking audits facilitated by Feet First provided an opportunity to observe the pedestrian facilities that people liked and where they felt improvements could be made.

- Bicycle Mobility

In Downtown Bellevue, bicyclists share the roads with motorized traffic. Targeted outreach to bicyclists resulted in comments of support for facilities designed and designated specifically to support bicycle riding for a wider range of the community for destinations within Downtown Bellevue and to nearby neighborhoods and regional facilities.

- Transit Rider Mobility

Recognizing that Bellevue does not provide transit service but is responsible for maintaining public rights-of-way that support transit, most comments relate to ensuring that facilities and information for pedestrians are provided to make the journey to and from the bus (and light rail) comfortable and convenient. In addition, it was noted that the speed and reliability of buses is dependent on the operations of the roadways.

- Roadways

Comments supported the need to maintain mobility for cars, trucks and buses within Downtown Bellevue and to the regional freeways. Use of some roads for on-street parking and loading spaces was seen by some as a possible means to support economic activity while providing a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles.

### Transportation Commission Review and Comment

All of the comments gathered from the community are valid, and the draft scoping report is an inventory of those comments without assigning a weight or priority to any of them. Extracting

the most important or high priority issues from this inventory of comments will help staff and the consultant team focus effort in developing project ideas. The Commission is asked to review the attached draft scoping report and prepare to discuss the several key issues for each mobility topic that should be the focus of future work. In addition to identifying the key issues to address, perhaps there are topics from the report the Commission would suggest that staff not pursue further.

### Project Ideas

The community provided several suggestions for projects that would address their concerns and comments. These project suggestions are included in the detailed notes in Part 3 of the draft scoping report. Staff will consider these suggestions together with additional projects ideas that will be derived from travel demand modeling and operational modeling – in order to prepare a comprehensive set of project ideas to the Commission for evaluation with the measures of effectiveness.

### **NEXT STEPS**

February 9, 2012: Transportation Commission

- Plan Update Principles – Final
- Review status of Downtown Subarea Plan transportation projects

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Transportation Issues Scoping Report

(This report is in draft form until further information is added, including final edits and the project Principles that are expected to be approved by Council on February 6, 2012)